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ABSTRACT

A survey was administered to 789 agricultural students in Korea, and to 1019 students in 1890 schools and 2535 students in 1862 schools in the southeastern United States; responses were compared to establish similarities and differences between Korean and American students attending agricultural colleges. Differences between Korean and 1890 students, while significant, were notably less than those between Korean and 1862 students. Each student body was disproportionately male. More Koreans came from rural-agricultural backgrounds, and more of their parents were reared in rural-agricultural environments. Korean parents had less educational achievement than American parents. Korean students had less work experience than Americans. Fewer Koreans who planned to seek advanced degrees planned to stay in agriculture, but more of them expected to pursue that degree at their undergraduate university. Each student body discounted the influence of other persons on choice of a college major; recognition of the influence of circumstantial factors upon choice of a major was mixed. Parents were the basic source of college funding for Koreans; 1890 students were least dependent upon aid from parents. Far fewer Koreans anticipated eventual ownership of a farm. All students agreed on a desire to attain the highest levels of education. More Koreans believed in traditional roles for women and supported environmental conservation. Despite a traditionalistic cultural orientation, Korean responses lacked uniformity. (CM)

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COMPARISON OF SELECTED CHARACTERISTICS: STUDENTS IN COLLEGES OF AGRICULTURE, KOREA AND THE UNITED STATES[1]

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This paper reports the findings of a survey of selected characteristics of students in colleges of agriculture in the national universities of Korea. Those data are then compared to characteristics of agriculture students in the 1862 and the 1890 schools of the southeastern United States. Interpretation of differences is conducted in a loosely structured and nonrigorous framework of cultural variation. Sample sizes were as follows: Korea, 789; 1890, 1016; 1862, 2535.

Profile of the Korean Agricultural Student

Korean students of agriculture were predominantly male. More than a third came from farming villages, but half of them resided in cities. The changing character of Korean residence patterns is evidenced in the fact that substantially more than half of both their mothers and fathers had been reared in farming contexts, with just about 20 percent of parents raised in cities. Mothers were slightly more apt to be rural than were fathers. The educational levels of the mothers were lesser than were those of fathers. Eighty percent of them had not achieved beyond a grade school education, and less than three percent had any college education. Approximately half of the fathers had less than a high school education, and one-fifth of them had attended college.

Despite the fact that Koreans are an indisputably industrious people, few of the students expressed any work experience. A third of them had worked on the home farm, consistent with the fact that just about a third came from rural backgrounds. But less than five percent had worked as a rural hired hand, about a

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fifth had performed ag-related work, and only a third reported any form of work experience, for hire, of any kind.

Of those who expected to continue work for advanced degrees, somewhat more than half indicated that they would remain in the field of agriculture, and approximately two thirds said that they would remain at the same university without regard to the field of work to be pursued.

Other persons were not perceived as influential in the choice of college major by the Korean students. While parents were considered by many to have exerted much or some influence upon the decision, 42 percent thought their fathers to have exerted no influence on the choice of major and 50 percent assigned their mothers to that category. Nine tenths believed their clergyman to have exerted no influence, and nearly three fourths disregarded any influence on the part of their college professors. Given the excessive difficulty of changing majors once one has been accepted by a Korean university, this latter finding is not difficult to accept.

Circumstantial factors likewise were believed to have exerted little influence upon the choice of a college major. It was recognized that many of these factors had exerted some influence, but only the factor of "preparation for a career" was assigned the character of being "very influential" by any appreciable percentage of respondents (24 percent). Two thirds, or more, believed available scholarships, the desire to help other people, prior life experiences, the potential for a good income, the possibility of obtaining good grades in their major, or the persuasion and example of their friends to have exerted no influence whatsoever on their choice of a major. Most surprisingly, even the family, an almost sacred institution in Korea, was considered very influential by only seven percent of the respondents, while 63 percent believed it to have been of no influence.

The cost of educating the Korean agriculture students was borne almost totally by their parents, with nine tenths of the respondents indicating parents' contribution. In contrast, only scholarships and part-time work were noted as a source of funding by as much as five percent of the respondents. Loans, personal savings, and summer jobs were noted by miniscule percentages, while about four percent said that another person had contributed to the cost of their education.

The nonagricultural backgrounds, and apparent lack of rural-agricultural commitment, of the respondents is reflected in the fact that just over a third of them expected to own a farm in the future. Similarly, 70 percent believed they would live in a city upon completion of their agricultural education.

Educational aspirations of the Korean students were quite high. Overwhelmingly, they expected successfully to complete

their bachelor's degrees, and less than a third wished to stop at that level. About 39 percent would go on for a doctoral degree if opportunity provided. Not surprisingly, their actual educational expectations were somewhat different. A few who did not really wish to complete the bachelor's degree recognized the futility of opposition and the percentage who expected to leave before completion was less than those who had expressed the wish. Expectation for accomplishment of the master's degree remained about the same as the percentage of those who wished to do so, but the expectation of obtaining a doctorate was reduced by more than half. A corresponding increase in expectation of termination at the bachelor's level increased that percentage to 55 percent of the sample.

Development of the profile of the Korean agriculture student turns now from the socioeconomic aspects to which we have been giving attention. Respondents were requested to respond to a number of attitude questions, roughly divisible into three areas: the role of women, agriculture as a profession, and the environment.

Regarding the stereotype that women mainly attend college in order to find a husband, the Korean students were indeterminate. Thirty-six percent expressed themselves as undecided. Of the remainder, 37 percent found themselves in some degree of agreement with this belief, while 26 percent rejected it.

No such ambiguity attended the belief that men and women should be equal partners in the marriage. Three quarters of the students found themselves in agreement with this statement. A resounding 76 percent also believed that women should receive the same pay as men when they performed the same jobs. And a full half of the sample believed women to be as capable as men in performing work outside the home. Perhaps more significantly, fewer than a quarter of the respondents expressed the view that women were less capable of out-of-home work than were men.

Lest the foregoing give a one-sided and perhaps faulty interpretation of the attitude of these students, mainly male, with regard to women, let us consider the following response. A whopping 91 percent of the respondents believed that while it was acceptable for women to work, they would find total fulfillment only in motherhood. Consistent with that position, 58 percent did not believe women with children should hold full-time jobs outside the home. And 54 percent agreed with the statement that women should engage in full-time jobs only before they had children. Opinion regarding two other characteristics of women in the work force was divided and indecisive. Slightly more than a third of the respondents believed that agriculture occupations mostly were unsuited to women, with 41 percent disagreeing and almost one-fourth unable to make up their minds. They were only slightly less ambiguous regarding the embarrassment of working under a female supervisor. Of this sample, predominantly male, 40 percent

believed this would embarrass them, but 45 percent believed it would not. Fifteen percent found themselves unable to express an opinion.

In summation, the attitude toward females was more tolerant than one might have anticipated given the rigidities of tradition associated with Asian cultures. Possibly, of course, the response would not have been so tolerant had other elements of the population been surveyed.

The Korean students of agriculture were ambiguous in expression of their attitudes regarding the field of their potential future employment. Resoundingly (74 percent) they denied that agricultural occupations could be performed by people of little education. Somewhat less consensually, they refuted the contention that agriculture is a declining industry (61 percent). But they could achieve no consensus toward the statement that agriculture provides them with good career opportunities. Thirty-two percent believed it did, 39 percent believed it did not, and 29 percent were undecided.

The respondents came down foursquare regarding issues related to the environment. Eighty-one percent believed that economic progress destructive of natural beauty should not be allowed. Fully three quarters also believed that greater regulation should be applied to the use of agricultural chemicals, and that government should have the power to force farmers to adopt improved practices of agriculture and of conservation.

Comparison of Responses Made by Korean and American Agriculture Students

Response from Korean and American students was compared, to establish similarities and differences. Application of a nonspecific cultural theory led to the expectation that response of Korean students should be distinct from that of American students. On the same premise, it was anticipated that variances would differ as Korean students' response was compared to that from 1862 schools and from 1890 schools.

Tests of significance were conducted with chi-square and, where appropriate, Spearman's Rho. With no more than two or three exceptions, chi-square values were significant at very great levels. It is of interest that differences between Korean and 1890 students, while still significant, were notably less than those between Korean and 1862 students. It should also be noted that in those instances where it was logical to rank data response sets, there typically were no rank differences between Korean and United States students.

Chi-square values obtained from large samples are automatically suspect on technical grounds. The discussion of

Korean-American response variation which follows will be based on difference in proportional distribution. Unless otherwise noted, comparison is based on response from 1862 schools, and it should be borne in mind that response from the 1890 schools frequently was more like that of the Korean students.

Each student body was disproportionately male, for the Koreans it was more so with only 15 percent females. More Korean students came from rural-agricultural backgrounds, even though half of them were city residents. And more of the Korean parents were reared in rural-agricultural environments, a characteristic even more denotative of mothers than of fathers. Educational achievement of Korean parents was markedly less than that of American parents. The Korean mode was grade school; 1890 American mode was high school; American 1862 mode was post-high-school. This variance was extreme with regard to mothers.

The Korean students consistently and grossly had lesser work experience than was true of American students: on the home farm, as an agricultural hired hand, in ag-related work, and in any kind of paid occupation.

Many fewer of the Korean students who planned to seek advanced degrees planned to remain in agriculture. Conversely, more of them expected to pursue the advanced degree at the same university they were attending as undergraduates.

Each student body discounted the influence of other persons on the choice of a college major. But with the exception of the influence of a clergyman, considered to exert little influence by each, the Koreans were more adamant in assigning "no" influence to other persons: fathers, mothers, and college professors.

Recognition of the influence of circumstantial factors upon the choice of a college major was mixed. With the exception of career preparation, these factors were not thought to have been very influential, although American students did assign that character in some degree to the availability of a scholarship, the desire to help others, previous life experience, and the probability of a good income. It should be noted that in each of the instances noted, 1890 students considered these factors very influential in greater proportion than did 1862 students. A greater proportion of Korean students considered all but three of the circumstantial factors to have "no" influence on their choice of major. The exceptions were the availability of a scholarship, the possibility of attaining better grades, and the wishes of their families.

For Korean students, the basic source of college funding was their parents. Few had access to alternative sources such as scholarships, loans and grants, personal savings, and part-time and summer work -- which were available to and used by many of the

American students. 1890 students were least dependent upon aid from parents, and less reportive of summer work and personal savings than were 1862 students. On the other hand, the 1890 students reported the greatest proportion of dependence upon scholarships, loans and grants, and part-time work.

In strong contrast to the American students, Korean respondents did not anticipate eventual ownership of a farm (36 percent). This was consistent with the fact that more than two thirds of them expected to live in a city when they had completed their education, contrasting markedly to the residential intentions of the American respondents.

With regard to future education, students in the three groups agreed on their desire to attain the highest levels. The expectational mode was for the doctorate in each case. Korean and 1862 student aspirations were very similar in terms of the percentages desiring each level of attainment. The 1890 students differed in that many more desired the doctorate, an aspiration offset by a lesser proportion who perceived the baccalaureate as their goal. Actual educational expectations were lesser than aspirations, but the basic relationship between the three student groups remained essentially the same. Korean and 1862 students expressed similar percentages of educational expectation at the various levels, with the mode at the bachelor's degree. The 1890 students expressed higher levels of expectation regarding attainment of both advanced degrees, with the mode at the master's level.

In spite of the obvious differences between Korean and American students with regard to socioeconomic background characteristics, one could visualize both groups of students as reacting to the same environment. One has no difficulty in hypothesizing that they are responding to the same reality. One cannot be so comfortable with that belief, however, when comparing response to the attitude questions concerning women, agriculture, and environment. The variances were most extreme relevant to women, but were apparent in reference to agriculture and environment, as well.

Regarding women, two and a half times as many American students disagreed with the statement that girls attend college primarily to find a husband, a comment with which many students agreed. Although a clear majority of Korean students agreed, notably more of the American students believed that husband and wife should be equal partners in marriage, a response relationship almost duplicated with regard to the belief that women and men should receive equal pay for equal work. Quite a few more American students believed women equally capable as men in performing work outside the home. Although half of the Korean students accepted women as able to work outside the home, they were less inclined than American students to believe that agricultural occupations were suited to women. And Korean students were considerably more apt to believe that work supervision by a woman

would cause discomfort. Korean students were more prone to believe that women find their real life fulfillment in motherhood, a belief expressed almost twice as frequently as it was by 1890 students. Regarding the relationship between working and having children, Korean students were twice as liable as American respondents to believe that a woman should work full time only prior to bearing children, and much more strongly opposed to a woman resuming full-time work after her children had gotten into school.

While a majority of all three student groups denied that agriculture was a declining industry, a notably greater proportion of the Korean respondents was willing to accept this characterization. All respondents were quite consensual in their rejection of the statement that most work in agriculture can be done by people with little education, the 1890 students deviating somewhat from that belief. But American students were almost uniformally optimistic about the potential for finding good career opportunities in agriculture, while less than a third of the Korean students shared that belief.

Korean students tended to be more supportive of the attitude statements designed to test their beliefs regarding environment and conservation. But the nature of the questions themselves casts some doubt upon the motivation of the response. A somewhat greater proportion of the Korean students believed that economic progress destructive of natural beauty should be prevented. Somewhat more 1890 than Korean students believed that greater regulation of agricultural chemicals is needed, a position each advocated substantially more than did 1862 students. And half again as many Korean (76 percent) students as 1862 students believed that government should be able to enforce farmers to cooperate in improved agricultural and conservation practices, a statement on which 1890 students occupied the middle ground. However, it is likely that traditional agricultural mores and the historical Korean acceptance of governmental authority may have contributed more to the nature of this response than did environmentalist convictions.

Cultural Interpretation of Response Variations

Despite the fact that no rigorous theory of cultural variation has been developed, and no formally derived hypotheses have been stated, many of the response variations are consistent with a generalized set of expectations based on typically-perceived differences in western and eastern cultures. As examples: the Korean student body is biased more toward males, and is more strongly from a rural background: the family was perceived to have exerted greater influence upon the choice of a college major; the role definitions Korean students hold for women are more traditionalistic and agrarian in origin; a traditional, production-agriculture-oriented perception of agriculture may be considered

the basis for Korean student failure to perceive agriculture as an occupational field with a future.

Despite this strong residual effect of a traditionalistic cultural orientation, the effects upon Korean student response is not uniform. For example, neither the father nor the mother were considered particularly determinant in choice of a college major; rejection of the mother's influence could be considered consistent with the Korean culture, but the father's influence should have been recognized. The fact that these agriculture students do not expect to own farms, and that a large proportion of them anticipate future residence in the city, also represent breaks with tradition.

Interpretation of the response leads to the conclusion that Korea is a society in transition. Cultural norms of the past continue to exert major influence upon the behavior, the thought, and, one expects, upon the values of these students. At the same time, strong currents of change associated with the urbanization and industrialization of the nation are affecting the value premises out of which the attitudes and behaviors of these students develop. It is reasonable to believe that those social alterations, in cooperation with constantly increasing educational attainment, will accelerate change. The unstable government, and the dictatorial nature of the present administration, make prediction dangerous. For a time, coercion may force expression of opinion more consistent with tradition. But the long-run interpretation necessarily must be for continuing and more pervasive alteration in the future. During the immediate future, it is to be expected that response of Korean students will become more like that of Americans.

COMPOSITE TABLE -- RESPONSE OF KOREAN AND OF AMERICAN STUDENTS, PERCENT

Item	Indicator	Korean	1862	1890
Sex	Male	84.9	72.7	81.2
Residence	Rural	38.0	28.0	34.0
Youthful residence, father	Rural	56.6	44.1	51.1
Youthful residence, mother	Rural	59.6	37.4	47.6
Education, father	University	21.3	66.2	30.9
Education, mother	University	2.3	58.2	29.7
Worked on home farm	Yes	32.5	47.0	55.8
Worked as hired hand	Yes	4.4	47.2	46.6
Other ag-related work	Yes	24.0	58.2	66.2
Other work for pay	Yes	32.7	88.3	84.6
Remain in agriculture, graduate work	Yes	56.6	82.5	92.7
Remain present university, graduate work	Yes	63.6	57.7	35.1
Person influence on college major				
Father	None	42.2	34.6	42.0
Mother	None	50.0	39.7	35.6
Clergyman	None	89.2	94.2	89.7
College professor	None	70.9	63.5	50.9
Circumstantial influence on college major				
To help others	None	72.7	28.2	12.3
Career preparation	None	37.1	5.4	5.3
Prior life experiences	None	67.5	51.6	44.3
Income potential	None	67.5	43.3	24.4
Friends	None	89.8	83.5	76.3
Available scholarship	None	79.0	82.7	48.2
Potentially better grades	None	77.0	83.7	67.8
Family	None	63.2	80.0	68.3
Source of college funding				
Scholarship	Yes	5.1	26.7	38.7
Loan or grant	Yes	1.9	24.8	65.3
Own savings	Yes	0.5	75.5	63.2
Part-time work	Yes	5.8	54.7	58.4
Summer job	Yes	2.5	78.3	66.1
Parents	Yes	89.6	84.5	65.8
Other person	Yes	3.7	9.9	18.9
Expect to own farm in future	Yes	36.4	70.6	66.5
Expected future residence	City	69.5	32.3	48.5
Desired educational limit	Doctorate	38.9	38.6	53.1
Expected educational limit	Doctorate	15.9	18.3	31.1

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Composite Table (continued)

Item	Indicator	Korean	1862	1890
Attitude questions:				
College girls seek a husband	Agree	37.5	20.1	23.0
Men-women equal marriage partners	Agree	76.4	90.2	89.3
Men-women, equal work, equal pay	Agree	76.1	95.5	94.2
Men-women, equal performing work out of the home	Agree	50.6	61.4	63.8
Women unsuited to agricultural occupations	Agree	35.2	23.6	19.6
Uncomfortable with woman work supervisor	Agree	39.9	17.6	13.1
Woman, major fulfillment motherhood	Agree	91.4	33.5	54.7
Woman, work full-time only before she has children	Agree	54.3	25.8	22.6
Woman, work full-time after children in school	Agree	31.7	49.8	64.4
Agriculture a declining industry	Agree	25.0	8.0	14.4
Agriculture a source of good careers	Agree	32.1	86.9	93.8
Education unneeded for agricultural work	Agree	14.4	12.9	22.4
Halt economic progress to preserve natural beauty	Agree	81.6	74.6	70.4
Regulate use of agricultural chemicals	Agree	76.7	57.0	78.8
Government enforce improved agriculture and conservation practices	Agree	75.8	48.3	58.8

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